

ARS PASTORIA

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649356201

Ars pastoria by Frank Parnell

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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FRANK PARNELL

ARS PASTORIA

RIVINGTONS

London	<i>Waterloo Place</i>
Oxford	<i>High Street</i>
Cambridge	<i>Trinity Street</i>

P R E F A C E.

THIS little book is strictly a Supplement. It is a supplement to such books as Herbert's 'Country Parson,' Bishop Burnet's 'Pastoral Care,' and the more modern works of Bishop Wilberforce, Professor Blunt, Mr. Burgon, and Mr. Bridges.

My motive for publishing it will be far better expressed in the words of Vauvenargues than in any of mine. "Si nous avons écrit quelque chose pour notre instruction ou pour le soulagement de notre cœur, il y a grande apparence que nos reflexions seront encore utiles à beaucoup d'autres : car personne n'est seul dans son espèce ; et jamais nous ne sommes ni si vrais, ni si vifs que lorsque nous traitons les choses pour nous-mêmes."

The books I have quoted from are, with few exceptions, so well known, that I have sometimes dispensed with inverted commas, and not given the names of the authors.

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ARS PASTORIA.

FOR the right Management of a Parish there are twelve requisites :

I. UPRIGHTNESS. "On gagne peu de choses par habileté." The greatest things and the most praiseworthy that can be done for the public good are not what require great parts, but great honesty.

II. UNSELFISHNESS ; no sparing of self ; no self-seeking.

III. ABILITY.

IV. GOOD MANNERS. "Manners are something with everyone, and everything with some." It is not enough to be good ; you must be gracious as well. Do not walk into a poor man's house as if it were your own.

V. JUSTICE. Remember that every person, however low, has rights and feelings.

VI. PERSEVERANCE. When discouragements arise (and make up your mind to the fact that they

will arise : things will not always go smoothly ; subscriptions *will* come in slowly sometimes ; boys will behave badly in church at times ; your preaching will seem to have no effect ; you are sure to meet with opponents, who either in good faith or malice will throw hindrances in your path ; people will leave your church in a huff at times), go on as usual in your work of doing good. Study as much ; go to your schools as much ; visit as much. "Post malam segetem serendum est." Do not think you can change people's convictions, or overcome their prejudices, in a month, or even in five years. "Notre Seigneur demeura trois ans et demi à former le collège de ses douze Apôtres, encore y avait-il et un traître et beaucoup d'imperfections quand Il mourut. Il faut avoir un cœur de longue haleine ; les grands desseins ne se font qu'à force de patience et de longueur de temps."

VII. DECISION. When a difficulty arises, think what is to be done. But do not waste your time in thinking ; think, and settle on some course of action ; and then begin to carry out that course immediately. A good plan, when you are worried by a difficulty, is to discuss it with some sensible man or woman. Another is, to state clearly the difficulty on paper, and so look it in the face, next to write down the remedies, and then to apply those remedies in action, as soon as you can.

VIII. TOLERANCE. And yet have and maintain your own opinion.

IX. CONCILIATION.

X. INDIFFERENCE TO POPULAR OPINION. When you *know* a thing is right, do it at any price, in the teeth of opposition ; remembering Goethe's grand remark : " All I have had to do, I have done in kingly fashion. I let tongues wag as they pleased. What I saw to be the right thing, that I did." When you *think* a thing is right, think it all over again ; consider whether you are not prejudiced in favour of it ; consider what will be said by those who oppose it ; and then either reject it, or do it, no matter what will be said against it. If the thing is unpopular, " cheerfully take your share of its unpopularity : for such, I am convinced," says Macaulay, " ought to be the conduct of one whose object it is not to flatter the people but to serve them."

It is true that Cicero says, " Adhibenda est quædam reverentia adversus homines, et optimi cujusque, et reliquorum. Nam negligere quid de se quisque sentiat, non solum arrogantis est, sed etiam omnino dissoluti." But a wise modern has said : " I hold the constant regard we pay in all our actions to the judgments of others, as the poison of our peace, our reason, and our virtue."

XI. CONCENTRATION. Do one thing at a time ; and do that one thing as well as you can. " Recevez les affaires qui vous arriveront en paix, et tachez de les faire par ordre l'un après l'autre. Car si vous les voulez faire tout-à-coup, ou en desordre, vous ferez des efforts qui vous fouleront, et allanguiront

votre esprit, et pour l'ordinaire, vous demeurerez accablé sous la presse, et sans effet."

XII. GOOD TEMPER. Copy the celebrated Curé d'Ars. "À quelque moment qu'on le vit, environné, pressé, assailli par la multitude indiscreète, harçé de questions oiseuses et absurdes, obsédé de demandes impossibles, tirillé dans tous les sens, interpellé de partout, ne sachant à qui répondre, on le voyait toujours égal à lui-même, toujours gracieux, toujours aimable, toujours compatissant, toujours prêt à condescendre et à accorder ce qu'on lui demandait, toujours la figure reposée et souriante. Jamais on n'a pu surprendre en lui le moindre signe de dépit, jamais la moindre brusquerie ; jamais sur son front la plus imperceptible nuance de mécontentement, l'ombre d'un nuage ; jamais sur ses lèvres de reproche ni de plainte ; jamais un mot plus haut que l'autre."

You can make yourself calm and cheerful, if you choose. It is hard, but it is possible. "Der Mensch kann was er soll ; und wenn er sagt er kann nicht, so will er nicht." And you will not be a good clergyman unless you are calm. "Nihil magnum est nisi quod simul et placidum."

Cicero has this fine remark about statesmen's duties. It is quite as true for you. "Omnino qui reipublicæ præfuturi sunt, duo præcepta Platonis teneant : unum, ut utilitatem civium sic tueantur ut quæcunque agunt ad eam referant obliti commo-